

# The 'She' Factor

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'Stop being delusional, you won't get that far, you're just a girl! If you make a mistake, publicly, you won't be forgiven, because you're a girl'. When one reads these words, they think, that they were said centuries ago, or by an uneducated folly. Some might even agree with the words. Does this stun you? I was stunned. Truth be told, I heard those words recently.

Most of us think that the denouncing of women had lost its grip in most parts of the world, over forty years ago and in some parts, longer than that too. Most of us think wrong. It still exists, though not blatant, it still does. This form of discrimination happens everywhere in our day to day lives, in workplaces and even in some schools. Nevertheless, some countries don't even have laws to protect the rights of women, at all. You may think, 'Why on earth is she still ranting about a cause that has practically been put to the grave around forty years ago?' Well, I'd rather rant and whinge about something that still strikes a chord, as opposed to turning a blind eye away from it.

For a secondary school-attending young women like myself, the kind of maltreatment or discrimination that we would face, is not that of ungranted suffrage, forced marriage or prevention from working. The kind we would face is stereotyping and some of us are subjects of pre-designed futures and the inability to choose our futures for the mere reason, we are girls. Luckily, I have not been a subject of such discrimination to that degree and I'm extremely lucky that I have a family that chooses to support most of my decisions. Some girls are not that lucky and I am not speaking about those who come from impoverished backgrounds and have parents who knew of no education. NO! I am speaking of those who are my peers, who come from 'well-off' backgrounds and who go to the same school as me.

For these reasons, I support the cause of feminism. I am a feminist. I believe in equality, I believe in choice, I believe in legal protection for women like myself and no, I don't believe in extra rights for us women, I just believe in the same rights for us. I believe that we should make what is equivalent to a dollar for what is equivalent to the dollar a man makes, as opposed to the equivalent of the seventy-cents we make. Contrary to the stereotypes, feminists are NOT man-hating, we don't demonise men and we do not condone reverse discrimination one-bit! In fact we appreciate men, love their existence and enjoy their presence! They are our fathers, brothers, uncles and husbands! In fact, there are male feminists who believe in our cause! After all, we live in this world together, like a cart with two wheels, the cart cannot move with only one wheel. We don't like to be stereotyped and we shouldn't be.

I don't like being called names if I chose to have a career, a path of life I picked for myself, become a Member of Parliament, a successful journalist or merely come home late at night one day! I don't like to be either seen as a 'suppressed' woman because I choose to cover up when I dress or be seen as a "sex object" that says 'come hither' if I chose to show a bit of skin either! How can you determine my thoughts and motives solely by my external appearance? Those were purely my choices and no one has the right to judge me for them! Some people suppress us because they say it's how the "world works", or distort the name of religion just to allow themselves to continue with their maltreatment. Some of those people, even believe that we are deficient, not suited to live beyond the walls of a house and just raise children and as if raising children is a very easy job! To raise a child takes strength, determination and time. It is NOT for the faint-hearted! They forget that we're their mothers, sisters, aunts and wives. The job of a mother is not an easy one! Those people are not only males; there are plenty of self discriminating, self hating and self degrading women out there! Is it ludicrous? It is! Are these disgusting ideologies that should've been put to the grave over 2000 years ago? They are!

I won't deny that we have biological differences and sometimes our thought patterns are different too. But, that is no factor to say that we can't reach executive positions like those of judges, prime-ministers, presidents and secretaries of state! You can only look at examples like Margaret Thatcher, Helen Clark and Hilary Clinton to say: Yes we can!

I am proud to be born female and I fully acknowledge that it's a privilege and not an inhibition! I have the 'she' factor: it denotes strength, ability and persistence. I wouldn't have it any other way!

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